THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) The National Airports Authority has a plan to start construction of a new airport at Tura in Meghalaya in the current yer.

Faulty Telephones in Allahabad U.P.

1584. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 3961 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 30th March, 1993 and to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the residents of Preetam Nagar who comes under sub-exchange of Transport Nagar, Allahabad had lodged complaints regularly for more than a fortnight of October, 1992 for faulty telephone in that area, if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Accounts Officer, Telephone Revenue, Allahabad Division had asked each customer of the said area get it verified from the exchange that the particular telephone was out of order so that the telephone rent should be waived, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any action on the receipt of representation of the residents of that area for waiving of telephone rent, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the reasons that the Department of Telephones has not taken any initiative to waive the telephone rent so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes. Sir. There were regular complaints due to frequent dropwire cuttings (thefts) in Preetam Nagar area in the said period. More than 60 telephones remained faulty due to these thefts and FIR was lodged with Dhoomangani thana police station for the same. After getting the police concurrence, the missing drop wires were replaced and the telephones restored.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) There was one case on which rebate has been granted on the basis of report of Assistant Engineer, Transport Nagar.

(d) No such cases of Preetam Nagar area is pending.

Separation of Regulatory and Operational Function of Telecom Commission

1585. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the chairman of the Telecom Commission agreed in round-table discussion for separation of the regulatory and operational functions of the commission;

(b) if so, what is the new independent regulatory structure which the Government have in mind; and

(c) whether any thinking has been done on this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) to (c) The high power committee (Nanda Committee) on new Indian Telecom Act has recommended separation of regulatory and operating authority. The recommendtion is under consideration.

Private Electronic Intelligence gathering agencies in India

1586. SHRI G. G. SWELL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether private electronic intelligence gathering agencies are operating in India are offering their services to persons who can pay their price: and

(b) whether Government is going to make use of these agencies for preempting and combating terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) The Deptt. of Telecom has not licenced operation of private electronic intelligence gathering agencies in India.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Improvement in Telecom Service in West Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh

1587. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any monitoring is done by Andhra Pradesh Telecom as to how calls emanating from small towns in various districts are actually connected by trunk operators;

(b) if so, the ratio of trunk calls booked from rural areas and the number of which are actually connected;

(c) whether any monitoring has been done in West Godavari District Telecom in the last three years;

(d) wheher it is a fact that trunk calls booked from small towns and major panchayats of West Godavari to out of State destinations are frequently un-connected; and

(e) if so, whether any directions have been issued to the District Telecom authorities to attend to complaints immediately in this respect and what other steps are being taken to improve telecom services in West Godavari district?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NADU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) About 40 per cent of the total trunk calls booked per day are from rural areas out of which about 85 per cent are effective.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Not applicable in view of reply at (c) and (d) above. However, suitable instructions exist and the same have been reiterated for further improvement of telecom services.

Theft of telephone equipments and cables from Ballabgarh and Faridabad exchanges

1588. SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that telephone equipments and cables etc. worth lakhs of rupees have been stolen from the Ballabgarh and other telephone exchanges in Faridabad as per report appearing in the press recently;

(b) if so, what are the details of the equipments and telephone cables lost and their value;

(c) whether any inquiry has been made to fix the responsibility on the local telephone staff for lack of vigilance and also effort made to recover the stolen telephone equipments; and

(d) if so, what are the findings of the inquiry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) and (b) There was a cable theft in Ballabgarh Sub-Division in April, 1993. The details are:

Under-ground junction cable 800 pairs value Rs. 13,600.00

Underground junction cable 200 pairs value Rs. 8,700.00

(c) F.I.R. lodged with the Police authority at Faridabad.